

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-01 EB-04 CIAE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 /027 W

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O 212024Z OCT 74

FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3774

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID GT BH

SUBJECT: VISIT OF AID EMPLOYEES TO BELIZE

GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP/AID

REF: GUATEMALA 5744

1. FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE WEIGHED BEFORE APPROVAL OF PROPOSED VISIT.

A. COURTESY. FACT THAT U.S. OFFICIALS IN COMPANY OF PROSPECTIVE GUATEMALAN CUSTOMER HAVE VISITED BENQUE VIEJO AS WELL AS PURPOSE OF VISIT WOULD IMMEDIATELY BECOME KNOWN TO BELIZE ELECTRICITY BOARD, THE BELIZEAN MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHERS, UNDOUBTEDLY INCLUDING GOVERNOR POSNETT. QUESTION WOULD VERY LIKELY ARISE AS TO WHY APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES WERE NOT APPRISED OF IT IN ADVANCE. GOVERNOR POSNETT KNOWS OF PROJECT; IN FACT, IT WAS ONE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION AT OCTOBER 14 DINNER HE GAVE FOR BRITISH CONSUL MCQUILLAN WHO WAS VISITING BELIZE (OTHER GUESTS INCLUDED BELIZEAN OFFICIALS). GOVERNOR WAS ENTHUSIASTIC, BUT I AM SURE HE WOULD WANT TO KNOW IN ADVANCE ABOUT BENQUE VIEJO VISIT.

B. USEFULNESS. WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY FROM BELIZE ELECTRICITY BOARD, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT

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TECHNICAL QUESTIONS VISITORS WOULD PRESUMABLY WANT TO ASK COULD

BE ANSWERED.

C. DOMESTIC POLITICS. BELIZE ELECTIONS WILL BE ON OCTOBER 30. MAYOR OF BENQUE VIEJO IS A STRONG OPPOSITION CANDIDATE. HE MIGHT, OR MIGHT NOT APPROVE VISIT, BUT, IF HE DID, GOVERNMENT PARTY CANDIDATE WHO IS A STRIDENT ANTI-AMERICAN MARXIST, MIGHT MAKE A LAST MINUTE CAMPAIGN ISSUE OF IT.

D. IMPLICATIONS FOR BELIZE-GUATEMALAN DISPUTE. APART FROM IMMEDIATE RISK INHERENT IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SUCH A VISIT WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL OF SOME INSTRUMENTALITY OF GOB MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION U.S. POLICY SUPPORTS THE VIEW THAT BELIZE BELONGS TO GUATEMALA.

2. I RECOGNIZE THAT GOG UNLIKELY TO BE INTERESTED IN GETTING APPROVAL FROM GOB VIA GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION OF ANY SORT, SINCE THIS MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS AN ACT OF RECOGNITION. HOWEVER, I WOULD THINK MATTER COULD BE ADEQUATELY HANDLED BY:

A. INFORMAL COMMUNICATION (E.G., A TELEPHONE CALL) TO THE HEAD OF BELIZE ELECTRICITY BOARD (EUGENE ROBINSON) FROM HEAD OF CORRESPONDING GUATEMALAN ENTITY, TOGETHER WITH

B. SOME COMMUNICATION FROM BRITISH CONSUL IN GUATEMALA TO GOVERNOR POSNETT.

3. AS FOR TIMING, MY RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE THAT, BECAUSE OF ANTICIPATED TIME REQUIRED TO OBTAIN APPROVAL AND BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE LOCAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, VISIT TO BENQUE VIEJO MIGHT BEST BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS.

4. CONGEN'S COMMUNICATIONS ARE HANDLED BY BELIZE TELEGRAPH OFFICE; HENCE, EMBASSY GUATEMALA AND DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER CLASSIFYING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FOR TRANSMISSION CABLES CONTAINING ANY INFORMATION THEY WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE DISCLOSED TO GOB AND BELIZEAN PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY DURING PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD. GAWF

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTRIC POWER, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BELIZE00624
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740299-0908
From: BELIZE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741032/aaaabart.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: GUATEMALA 5744
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 SEP 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF AID EMPLOYEES TO BELIZE GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP/AID
TAGS: EAID, OTRA, GT, BH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005